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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MOOLENAAR).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 20, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN R. MOOLENAAR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

THE GRAVEYARD OF EMPIRES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, this weekend, I learned that there would be no cost-of-living adjustment this year for those living on Social Security. Not only will Social Security recipients not see a cost-of-living increase this year but, also, disabled veterans.

There are over 131,000 veterans on disability in North Carolina who will be suffering this year. Our senior citizens and disabled veterans are having a

difficult time making ends meet, and it is not fair that the Federal Government continues to waste money with failed policies like Afghanistan. It is disgraceful.

Mr. Speaker, we will be raising the debt ceiling of this Nation for years to come because of wasteful spending. This means we will be borrowing more money to continue spending more than we take in. Our annual Federal deficit is still over \$400 billion a year.

The American people are sick and tired of our wasteful spending, and I know they are frustrated. Once again, our failed policy in Afghanistan is a prime example of the waste, fraud, and abuse of the American taxpayer dollar, but it continues on and on for years to come.

In the recent House-Senate conference bill, Congress included \$38 billion for the Overseas Contingency Operation, which is a slush fund used to get around sequestration spending caps for the Department of Defense.

We have already spent over \$685 billion in Afghanistan since 2001, and according to the Congressional Budget Office, we will be spending at least \$30 billion a year in Afghanistan for the next 8 years, and Congress has never debated the policy of Afghanistan.

This slush fund goes to fund our never-ending wars in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan. We continue to spend money on a fool's errand in the Middle East. Meanwhile, our disabled veterans at home cannot keep up with the rising costs of daily living. President Obama will be keeping 10,000 troops in Afghanistan through all of next year and at least 5,000 there after 2016.

Mr. Speaker, years ago, I reached out to a former commandant of the Marine Corps whom I knew, and I asked him to give me his advice on Afghanistan. Many times he has given me his best advice, but one that has stuck with me for years is this—and I quote the commandant:

“What do we say to the mother and father . . . the wife . . . of the last marine or soldier killed to support a corrupt government and corrupt leader in a war that cannot be won?”

Mr. Speaker, that is Afghanistan. It is a waste.

How ridiculous it is that Congress and the administration think we can change history. The history of Afghanistan has shown that no outside military force has ever changed it, from Alexander the Great, to the British, to the Russians. It is truly the graveyard of empires, and I hope we won't have a headstone there, waiting, that will read, “Welcome, America, to the graveyard of empires.”

Mr. Speaker, this poster beside me is a reminder of the cost of war in Afghanistan. There is a little girl holding her mother's hand as they are waiting to follow a caisson down to bury the little girl's father and the wife's husband.

Congress, wake up. We are heading for collapse in this country. Let's not continue to spend and waste money, blood, and limbs in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform, to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform, and, God, please bless America and please wake up the Congress before it is too late.

NURSING HOME ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WALKER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, we have a problem in making sure that all of our senior adult population is treated with the utmost respect and proper care.

HUD's Section 232 Program was intended to provide Federal loan insurance for loans covering the needs of

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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